

to build robots. They then compete against other teams in regional competitions and culminate with a national competition at Disney World in Florida.

Tomorrow FIRST is bringing 12 of its outstanding teens here to provide a mini version of one of its competitions. One of these teams, I am proud to say, is Montwood High School and their robot Rambot which comes from El Paso, Texas, in my district. I am very proud of the hard work and determination that brought them here this week.

Mr. Speaker, many of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle have already joined me in supporting FIRST and are helping to sponsor tomorrow's event. I urge each one of my colleagues, as well as their staffs, to come by the Rayburn foyer tomorrow between 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to learn how the lives of our students and students in my colleagues' districts can be changed forever in a very positive way.

CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES OF FREE AIR TIME

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, as we continue to debate campaign finance reform some of my colleagues continue to press for free air time. Some of the legislation we will be considering requires broadcasters to sell time to candidates at 50 percent below the already discounted rate. I really do not think they have carefully considered the consequences of this issue.

The first problem is that it will not necessarily reduce campaign spending. What would stop a candidate from buying twice as many spots?

Secondly, the glut of commercials will simply turn voters off. A survey by Opinion Research Corporation last year showed that 61 percent of adults do not want more campaign ads on TV or radio.

What do they want? They want more debates and news coverage, all of which are currently provided by broadcasters for free.

Mr. Speaker, Congress needs to take a step back, let the voters decide and allow the best candidate to win.

HOW WE CAN BEST SERVE AMERICA'S STUDENTS

(Mr. WYNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, good morning. I rise today to talk about the issue of education and the debate that is evolving here in the House about how we can best serve American students. The best seems to be two areas of thought. The Republicans today and tomorrow will talk about another program to aid private school education.

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The Democrats again are saying we need to support public education. This is really ironic when we think of the fact that 90 percent of American students attend public school. It would seem only logical that we would put our money where the students are.

However, that is not the case on the Republican side. They are advocating so-called savings accounts for education that would allow tax-free contributions into private schools. That is not the way we can help American education.

The Democrats have a very simple and straightforward approach. We suggest that what we need to do is improve public schools. We need to reduce class size by providing Federal assistance so that we can hire more teachers. Sixty percent of Americans surveyed say the Federal Government needs to spend more money on public education. We can hire 100,000 new teachers, we can reduce class size, we can modernize our schools.

We need to put our money where the students are, and that is in public education.

COMMITMENT TO A MORE SECURE FISCAL FUTURE FOR AMERICANS

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, the tax man cometh and cometh and cometh. Yet, there is a bright light at the end of this dark tax tunnel.

Today in Congress, Congress will have that chance to answer the call of millions of hard-working families in this country who feel the Federal Government needs a new system of taxation. Today, the Federal Government has the great opportunity to renew the American dream.

Mr. Speaker, Members of Congress have a chance to lift the tax burden off their constituents by passing legislation to sunset the current Tax Code. It is time to retire this outdated and oppressive Tax Code; it is time to give our children and generations to come the opportunity to participate in the American dream that rewards hard work, not penalizes it, with an unfair tax system. It is time to clear the way for a fairer, less complicated, and less burdensome tax system in this country.

Mr. Speaker, let us tell the American people that we are serious about changing the tax system and pass the Tax Code Termination Act. It is our commitment to a more secure fiscal future for our children and future generations.

ELIMINATE THE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, 3 weeks ago this House made a commitment to eliminate the marriage tax penalty in the budget that we passed, and I think a series of questions best illustrate why it is so important.

These are pretty simple questions. Do Americans feel that it is fair that our Tax Code actually provides a higher tax on a married couple just because they are married? Do Americans feel that it is fair that 21 million married, working couples pay on the average of \$1,400 more just because they are married? Do Americans feel that it is right that the only way today to avoid the marriage tax penalty is to file for divorce? Of course, Americans all agree that is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, \$1,400 in the south suburbs of Chicago, that is one year's tuition at Joliet Junior College; that is 3 months day care at a local day care center. Higher taxes just because you are married are wrong.

We made a commitment in the budget that we passed out of this House a few short weeks ago to eliminate the marriage penalty. Let us work together in a bipartisan way. I hope President Clinton will join with us in making this a bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage penalty. Let us eliminate the marriage penalty, and let us eliminate it now.

PAKISTAN NUCLEAR TESTS: AN- OTHER CLINTON FOREIGN POL- ICY FAILURE

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, make no mistake about it, Asia is in a full blown nuclear arms race, and I think Bill Clinton is personally responsible for it.

The sad truth is that Bill Clinton permitted the sale of satellite and missile technology to China. China provided nuclear assistance to Pakistan and Iran. That prompted India to boost its nuclear weapons program, not because it was afraid of Pakistan, but because it was afraid of China, and then Pakistan upped the ante.

At best, this represents striking incompetence on the part of the Clinton-Gore administration. It will require congressional and other investigations to establish whether corruption also played a role.

Presidents Reagan and Bush restored America's credibility and left America and the world safer places. Clinton has systematically eroded our credibility abroad and he is irresponsibly squandering the presidential legacy he inherited.

So what does this President do? He jumps on India and Pakistan and jumps on a plane to China, which is the source of the problem. Outrageous. I suppose consistency is too much to expect from this administration.

MAJORITY OF AMERICANS WILL NOT BENEFIT FROM TAX REFORM PROPOSAL

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today we have the stealth plan to fix the system of taxation in America, to repeal the entire Tax Code. Well, not the entire Tax Code, not the most regressive part of the Tax Code.

Seventy-two percent of the American people pay more in FICA taxes than they do income taxes to the Federal Government. Guess what? That 72 percent of the American people are left out of this phony election year proposal. But what is included, what we are going to repeal is the mortgage home deduction. That is the one, the one shelter, that middle income, working Americans have available to them is a deduction for the interest on their home mortgage. That is repealed. That is gone.

We are also going to repeal that which provides for employer-provided health care and charitable deductions. Guess what? This stealth proposal is a dagger aimed right at the heart of working Americans under the guise of helping them. So once again, the Republicans can service the special interests that are doing so well under the current code, but want to do better under a new one.

EDUCATION SAVINGS ACT

(Ms. DUNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the Education Savings Act Conference Report.

I encourage the adoption of this legislation for a number of reasons. It helps families choose the best schools possible at all levels of education by providing families with much needed education-related tax relief.

Not only does this bill create opportunities for families to save their hard-earned dollars and receive interest tax-free for costs associated with K through 12 education, but it also makes higher education more affordable by offering favorable tax treatment for prepaid tuition plans.

This bill encourages families to invest in their children's future. One of the provisions which the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) and I have worked on in this bill enables families with school-aged children to save money tax-free for future college expenses through plans established by private institutions. Today, more than 50 independent colleges and universities have joined together to offer families prepaid tuitions at numerous institutions.

I hope my colleagues will look at this legislation and support it later today.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Mr. FARR of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because we are finally getting around to campaign finance reform, which as many people know, I have authored the major bill on campaign finance reform which will be debated.

So the idea that we are debating campaign finance reform is music to my ears, but then I look at the way it has all been set up and I am reminded of the song in Musicman that goes, "Talk a little, pick a little, talk a little, pick a little; talk, talk, talk, pick a little, pick a little."

Well, that is exactly what we are doing. We are talking a lot and we are picking it apart. There are 258 amendments to 11 different measures. I think the debate is designed to be confusing, it is designed to go on and on and on and on. It is designed to never have anyone coalesce around any one of the bills.

Mr. Speaker, last night the Republican Party went out and raised \$10 million, and today they are going to get up and talk about campaign finance reform. You bet we need it.

TIME TO SCRAP THE TAX CODE

(Mr. BLUNT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, it is time to scrap the Tax Code. "Scrap the Code" has been a slogan for tax reformers for years now, but today we have an opportunity to take the first step toward its realization.

Today on the House floor is an opportunity to vote the Tax Code Elimination Act, a bill that will sunset the Tax Code on December 31, 2002, and require the Congress to come up with a new, simpler, fairer, revenue-neutral Tax Code.

This bill will make fundamental tax reform a major issue in the 2000 presidential race and will force this issue to the top of the national political agenda.

Lawmakers have been talking about reforming the Tax Code for too long. It is time to act. This bill will show our willingness to act and our willingness to listen to the millions of Americans who have been calling for an end to our Tax Code for many years.

Fundamental tax reform should be a bipartisan issue. Democrats and Republicans both have an interest in the Tax Code that is fairer, simpler and less complicated. The time to act, Mr. Speaker, is now.

FBI WANTS TO TAX AMERICANS

(Mr. BARR of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, in just 5 short months, we will have an opportunity to witness real progress being made in our effort to keep guns out of the hands of criminals when the National Instant Check System, the so-called instant background check, goes into effect, pursuant to the previous Brady law.

But be careful. I urge all Americans and my colleagues to be very careful about what the FBI is planning, and that is a stealth tax and a registry of gun ownership in America.

The FBI is proposing to tax every single gun transfer in this country up to \$30, despite the fact that Congress maintains, the last time I looked 2 minutes ago, the sole power to tax in this country. The FBI is proposing to use the National Instant Check System as a subterfuge for taxing the American people, and they are also proposing something that we have fought in this Congress and we ought to continue to resist, and that is a national registry of gun ownership in this country.

Let us move forward with the national tax system, but let us resist vigorously, through H.R. 3949, this unconstitutional effort by the FBI to tax and to register firearms.

U.S. TAX CODE IS A MESS

(Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Tax Code is a mess. When the income tax was first introduced in 1914, the entire Code was 14 pages long and the top tax rate was 7 percent. Today it is nearly 4,000 pages and constantly changing.

While last year alone we managed to add 334 pages, create 285 new sections, and add 824 amendments, that is bad enough, but it is not the whole story. The code alone is only a part of the law. The rest comes in the form of implementing regulations and tax court decisions which make the code even more incomprehensible. It literally grows every day. Some estimates put the cost of compliance at over \$250 billion per year. That is \$250 billion of unproductive effort. Think what that could do for the economy if it was channeled into other areas.

A majority of Americans want an end to the current code and we have a responsibility to take this problem head-on. We cannot continue with business as usual. We need a national debate to build a consensus for sweeping change. The Tax Code Termination Act is the first essential step in breaking free from the cycle of incrementalism which has produced the current code.

AMERICANS DESERVE ACTION ON REFORMING THE TAX CODE

(Mr. COOK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1